

gal, Mayo and West Galway, Kerry and (in part) Cork. The Aran Islands represent a fourth western area. West Donegal seems to be characterized by excesses of dark hair and mixed eyes and a very slightly higher mesocephaly than the total Irish series. Mayo is slightly high in stature and in cephalic index, definitely so in proportions of dark hair and mixed eyes. West Galway, on the other hand, is notable for markedly tall stature, lowering of the cephalic index, and lighter hair and eyes. This tendency is still further accentuated in the Aran Islands which are tallest of all of the Irish subgroups, are almost dolichocephalic, and have nearly the highest proportion of light hair shades. Yet eye color in the Aran Islands is predominantly mixed. 142

Kerry is also tall, but the most round-headed of the Irish subgroups and excessive in dark hair, and lowest in light eyes.

The central plain of Ireland and especially the counties of Westmeath and Longford show the strongest concentration of blondness which is accompanied by slightly shortened stature, diminished lightness of eye, and mesocephaly. This blond area is sharply delimited to the east by a coastal band of darker haired and even shorter dolichocephals, notably concentrated in Meath, Louth, and County Dublin, which is the shortest and most dolichocephalic area of Ireland, but ranks high both in darkness of hair and in lightness of eyes.

Now it is quite reckless to attempt definitive racial correlations on the basis of the coincidences and differences in geographical distribution of separately plotted anthropological characters. Actually, racial type distributions can be accurately ascertained only by correlations of morphological and metric features in individuals. From the data presented in this paper, however, a few purely preliminary and tentative suggestions may be made, subject to revision or retraction in the light of an exhaustive study of all of the material and a consideration of historical and prehistorical events.

It may be presumed that the western parts of the island represent to some extent refuge areas occupied by the earlier strata of the population. It is in precisely these areas (West 142 174 [197]) ●

142 Donegal, Mayo, West Galway, the Aran Islands and Kerry)
174 that our information gives us the highest predominance of
[197] Gaelic speech. If the anthropological characters plotted separately actually combine in the populations of these areas we should say that the earliest population stratum of the island consists of tall, subbrachycephals with dark hair and mixed eyes and a second element, even taller, subdolichocephalic with light hair and mixed eyes. Then since the latter type presents the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers we should be inclined to hazard a guess that the tall brunet brachycephals represent the earlier pre-Keltic population and that Gaelic languages were introduced by the tall, long-headed near-blonds.

The blond, long-headed element in the central plain, concentrated in Longford and Westmeath is presumably Nordic and possibly represents a survival in great part from Iron Age Nordic, Viking, and other Scandinavian occupations. The Aran Islanders and the inhabitants of Galway may perhaps owe their comparative blondness and long-headedness to the mixture with these invaders which has gone on throughout the plain, but it is also possible, as previously stated, that the original Goidelic invaders may have been near-Nordics.

Along the east coast the short dark dolichocephals with long heads but very light eyes may also be, for the most part, the survivals of pre-Keltic populations. Some element in the population must have been responsible for the introduction of the Megalithic monuments and I believe it to have been these brunets with blue eyes. The association of light eyes with dark hair was formerly considered by me to be the result of the crossing of a pure brunet Mediterranean stock with a pure blond Nordic stock in which the eye color of one race combined with the hair color of another. However, recent anthropometric studies in Iran and Iraq, especially those of Dr. Henry Field, reveal the presence of many otherwise purely brunet, long-headed stocks of basic Mediterranean affinities which have almost no pure brown eyes, but generally irides of mixed pigmentation—brown in the pupillary zone and blue in the

ii COUNTRYMEN AT WORK 67

statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another". 476
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Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship. 476
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This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to 476
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Introduction

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[162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish
Gaeltacht.¹ It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly
by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This
tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its
inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least
5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land
and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more
recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many
works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized,
of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first
decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag
over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most
attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing
the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and
grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

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127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland
in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cul-
tural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955
and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and cul-
ture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several
peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of
the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to
undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part
of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighbor-
ing island—Inis Thiar²—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct
library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

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142 ¹ The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—
embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of
approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

² In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is
translated Little Isle.

INTRODUCTION • 3

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000 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary, and clerical figures.³ A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

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538 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Association, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage [204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasized the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195-196).

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[648] Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] ³ The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Becker's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

4 • INTRODUCTION

choice of cultural elements to be revived and perpetuated. Countless forms of peasant culture, many of which are still widespread, have come to be demeaned and even their existence denied by the more militant nativists. The attitude of these persons toward traditional songs, dances, and sports such as hurling is quite at variance with that toward matchmaking in courtship and the belief in fairies, ghosts, and witches. It is the prevalence of such customs as the latter in rural Ireland which has been largely responsible for bringing the term peasant into such disrepute.

Some of the extreme points of view held by Irish nativists are: the Irish today are a "pure" Celtic "race" and possess psychological and behavioral traits which are "racially" rooted, including even a "racial memory;" Celtic civilization developed before and was "superior" to Greek and Roman civilizations, and the Irish branch of European civilization during the Middle Ages was "advanced" over those of other European societies; the Irish literary tradition has been "richer" and of greater esthetic "worth" than other European traditions of the past; the Irish language is a more effective communicator of ideas than other languages (especially English) and mirrors the distinctive Irish or Celtic "personality," "spirit," or "soul;" in order to achieve national identity, unity, and greatness, the Gaelic tongue once again must be spoken universally in the nation; and, Ireland is the "most Catholic" of all countries—in historical tradition, strength of belief, and morality. Inis Beag folk have been singled out for adulation by nativists because they are Gaelic speakers, pious Catholics, and believed to be lineal descendants of Celts who lived in the island two millennia ago. Their character is thought to embody those traits of ancient origin held in highest esteem by the Irish: spirituality, independence, self-reliance, industriousness, strength, courage, imaginativeness, sanity, and emotional stability.

Nativism has had a profound impact both on government policies affecting Inis Beag and other Gaeltacht communities, and on the interpretations of the Inis Beag milieu by writers and film, radio, and television producers. The extensive services and subsidies afforded the islanders reflect, in part, the nativistic outlook of the government; it is hoped that they will halt emigration and preserve the Irish tongue and other valued cultural forms which are preserved here but are disappearing rapidly from the rest of the country. Nativism also has caused artists, who have most observed and publicized the folk, to distort the Inis Beag way of life in their works. Too often they have been unaware of, ignored, exaggerated, or misinterpreted beliefs and behavior so as to present a desired picture of the folk, one in keeping with the nativistic stereotype.

Distortions of Inis Beag culture also have been caused by primitivism—the idealization of past or future cultural estates or of contemporary primitive and folk cultures. Like nativism, it provides psychological compensation for frustrations created by personal or social disorganization. Its origins are manifold and can be traced back to antiquity, but in its modern guise it is an amalgam of utopianism since the sixteenth century, Enlightenment views of "natural man," rural attitudes toward urban life since the industrial revolution, Marxian socialism, late nineteenth-century cultural evolutionism, and early twentieth-century ethnology. Central to the primitivistic position is the belief that civilization has dehumanized man and undermined his valued institutions; it has caused social bonds to disintegrate,

INTRODUCTION • 5

668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s
12 were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1934 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long
12 have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western
197 seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located
177 in one of these.⁴ One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the
178 end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had
[162] fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

⁴ The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Britanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

6 • INTRODUCTION

number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166-169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabulary borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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